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Gala Farmersville Parade Bewilders Lt. Audie Murphy

BY WILLIAM C. BARNARD

FARMERSVILLE, June 14 (AP) Lt. Audie Murphy, freckle-faced boy with cool green eyes who won every decoration in the book, came home Thursday to one of the happiest families any fellow ever had.

Happy would describe Farmersville, too. And throw in a full-blown feeling of pride.

There never was so much horn honking and cheering and waving in Farmersville as when that long parade of automobiles swept down the square.

The little lieutenant was in the lead car, his face full of bewilderment.

For Audie is the type of guy who wonders what all the fuss is about.

The parade that met Audie at McKinney 16 miles away sped right on down to the little white house on the edge of Farmersville, where the lieutenant's sister, Mrs. Corrine Burns, lives.

There on the lawn were Corrine and Audie's two young sisters and a brother, from the Boles Orphans Home, Greenville.

Their eyes were bright with adoration and expectancy and tears.

There were tears in the brave lieutenant's eyes, too. They all tried to embrace him at once.

Mrs. Burns patted Audie's shoulders affectionately and said: "He hasn't changed a bit—not a bit. I was afraid he would change but he hasn't. All that has happened hasn't done a thing to him. I can see he's the same."

Nadine Murphy, 13, a slim pretty girl in a flowered print dress, looked lovingly at her famed brother and said softly, "You did awfully well." "And you've grown up," Audie replied. "My, how you've grown up." He had seen her last three years before he went off to war.

Billie Murphy, 11, the youngest sister, announced to a smiling crowd: "I'm 11 and this is my brother."

As for little brother Joe, 10, he clung with silent rapture to Audie's belt and looked up at the medals.

Murphy drove from San Antonio Thursday where he attended the thunderous homecoming accorded 13 generals and 45 other officers and servicemen.

During the long drive he seemed to draw a feeling of warm content from the countryside. He sank back in the car seat and relaxed and his vision lazily followed the passing scene—green rows of corn, gentle hills, fat cattle in the soft tree-shade of a meadow.

“This is what I came home to see,” Murphy said. “You can’t realize how swell this is until you’ve been away. Here I am riding along a highway—but I’m not watching every bit of the way for mines. Up there is a bridge, but I’m not sticking my head out of the window to make sure it hasn’t been blown—I’m sure it hasn’t. We passed through Temple and Waco and all the houses were not half wrecked by bombs. If we want to stop for soda, we can do it and we don’t have to speak a sign language to get it. The bones of cattle here don’t rattle when they walk away from you.

“All this makes me feel fine. Over there it was a helluva thing. I don’t like to talk about it, but I’m telling you it was a helluva thing. It wasn’t bad for me in Africa, but in Sicily and Italy and France it was bad.”

“Absent Minded.”

“It was so bad that I am getting absent minded from trying to push the unpleasant things out of my mind. You get so you push the things you ought to remember out of your mind, too. There were times when I was in battle from 70 and 80 days at a stretch, without relief. You get mad and tired and disgusted and you don’t care what happens to you. You just don’t care at all. You may think you have just a few minutes to live, but you don’t care.

“I swore while I was over there that I wouldn’t try to tell civilians how things were in the war. Words just don’t get it when you try to tell what war is. You can tell the funny things—like the time Sgt.

Sammy Sanchez of San Antonio and I were on Anzio beachhead. It was raining and we were in our foxhole and it was half-full of water. We had an old blanket over us. It was late in the afternoon and the Germans were throwing screaming meemies at us. A screaming meemie is an eight-inch shell that sounds something like a donkey braying. ‘I wish I could get a good look at one of those screaming meemies,’ I said to Sammy.

“Two seconds later, here came a screaming meemie. It burst in half near us and one half dropped to the ground right by our foxhole and rolled into it. I spit on it and the spit steamed. ‘Don’t you ever say anything like that again,’ Sammy said.

“You can tell funny things like that, but that is just a piece of the war. Maybe you get a little idea about war when I tell you that just driving along like this and looking out a good old Texas scenery makes me feel really swell and safe. Well I wouldn’t take anything for this.”

Friday Farmersville pays tribute to Murphy—there will be speeches from the platform in the square and the band from Ashburn General Hospital will play.

Mayor R. B. Beaver says it will be the biggest celebration Farmersville ever had.

Thursday night Murphy dined with his immediate family and other relatives in the private dining room of a downtown café.

As for the celebration Friday, the little lieutenant grinned gamely and said: "I'm as shaky as Hirohito's dreams."